

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Whaling to Whale Wars: *The International Convention on Whaling*

Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
IX. Global Connections

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives: The student will:

- Analyze a primary document
- Determine the reasons for the *International Convention on Whaling*
- Trace the path of restrictions on whaling
- Relate the *International Convention on Whaling* to current whaling activity

Time: 1 class periods

Materials: Documents: 1946 *The International Convention on Whaling*

Resources: *Images: The Sea Shepherd*
ICW List of Signatories
Reading: The Hunting of Whales

Background Information about the Convention on Whaling

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whaling>

Procedures:

1. Project the image of the ship, *Sea Shepherd*.
2. Ask students what they know about this ship. Discuss the purpose of the television show, *Whale Wars*. (For teacher background, go to: <http://animal.discovery.com/tv/whale-wars/>)
3. Engage students in a brief discussion about whaling and its pros and cons.
4. Provide copies of the document, *The International Convention on Whaling*
5. Provide students with background information about the creation of this Convention. (Information available for teacher at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whaling>)

6. Assign the articles from the Convention to different students. Articles can be grouped:

- a.** Preamble (Purposes)
- b.** Articles I and II (Key terms)
- c.** Articles III and IV (Structure)
- d.** Article V (Amending the Document)
- e.** Articles VI, VII, VIII (Recommendations) Ask these students to note the phrase, "...for purposes of scientific research..." and its interpretation. Also, how could Article VIII be used as a loophole for whaling nations?
- f.** Article IX (Infractions and Punishments) (What can the signatories REALLY do to nations who do not follow the terms of the Convention?)
- g.** Articles X and XI (Ratification, Joining, Withdrawing)

7. Have students do a quick reading of the articles and discuss briefly the content of the articles.

8. Additional information for students: In 1982, the International Whaling Commission on Whaling (the working agency established by the *International Convention on Whaling*) voted in favor of a moratorium on commercial whaling beginning in 1986.

9. Provide students with the resource, *The Hunting of Whales*.

- a.** Discuss whether Japan should be punished for whaling and, if so, what type of punishment(s)?
- b.** Japan contends that whaling is part of its culture. How should the United States and other countries consider this argument?
- c.** Japan claims that Norway and Iceland practice whaling, but do not receive equal scrutiny and condemnation from the world. The Japanese feel that targeting Japan is a "racial" or ethnic attack. Discuss the implications of this argument.

10. Ask students to agree or disagree with this statement:

The *International Convention on Whaling* (through the International Whaling Commission) adequately addresses the issue of international whaling. ■